

## Claims

1. A method of treating tap water and/or drinking water so as to reduce or destroy micro-organisms therein as well as other causes of skin diseases or waterborne diseases in human beings and animals, wherein the water is passed through a magnetic field being presented by a permanent magnet showing an energy product  $(BH)_{\max}$  of more than  $20 \text{ kJ/m}^3$  to which the water is exposed and a coercive force  $H_c$  of more than of about  $200 \text{ kA/m}$  at  $25^\circ \text{C}$ .
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the water is passed through a device comprising a conduit for transporting said water composed of magnetic material integral therein so as to form at least one permanent magnet internal of the conduit, said conduit being provided with an axially extending opening through which the water to be treated is to pass, with the magnetic material composition and its proximity to the water being such that an energy product  $(BH)_{\max}$  is generated of more than  $20 \text{ kJ/m}^3$  to which the water is exposed and a coercive force  $H_c$  of more than of about  $200 \text{ kA/m}$  at  $25^\circ \text{C}$  for reducing and destroying viable micro-organisms and other causes of skin diseases or waterborne diseases in said water with the north pole of said magnet being positioned at one axial end face of the magnet and the south pole positioned at the opposite axial end face
3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said conduit is annular.
4. A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said conduit has an external diameter in the range of from 10 to 20 mm, and wherein the axial opening is of a diameter in the range of from 3 to 7 mm.
5. A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said permanent magnet in said conduit is of a length in the range of from 7 to 15 mm.

6. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said magnetic material is a ceramic composed of strontium-ferrite, and said magnet provides a permanent induction of at least 0.38 Weber/m<sup>2</sup>.
- 5 7. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein at least two permanent magnets are formed in the conduit arranged in tandem relative to one another in the longitudinal direction such that the poles of the magnets at abutting end faces repel one another.
- 10 8. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said magnet in the conduit is located at a water tapping point selected from the group consisting of a water tap, a shower, a shower pipe, a mixing tap or a tapping point for a drinking water dispenser.
- 15 9. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the micro-organisms and other causes of skin diseases or waterborne diseases to be reduced or destroyed include bacteria selected from the class consisting of thermophilous bacteria, coli bacteria, shigella bacteria, vibrio bacteria, legionella bacteria, campylobacter bacteria, salmonella bacteria, helicobacter bacteria and pseudomonas bacteria; fungi, including  
20 yeast fungi and mould fungi, protozoans, including Entamoeba histolytica and Cryptosporidium, and flagellates, including Giardia lamblia.